

**Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte SoSe 2024:**

**Vortrag von Dr. Shao-Lan Hertel**  
(Wissenschaftliche Direktorin, Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst, Köln)

**Mapping a Modernist Metaverse:  
Gu Gan's (1942–2020) "Labyrinth City of  
Loulan" (1992)**

**Montag, 08.07.2024, Beginn: 18.15 Uhr**

Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte, Adenauerallee 10, ÜR (EG)  
<https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/68348313779?pwd=eEtacEJmbFNRC1BWVc1BnZTFNTFFNUT09>

*The Labyrinth City of Loulan (Loulan micheng)*, now kept in the Museum of East Asian Art, Cologne, was created in 1992 by pioneer Modernist Chinese calligrapher Gu Gan (1942–2020). Featuring pictographic variations of ancient Chinese oracle-bone and seal scripts, it exemplifies the Modernist renewal of calligraphic arts in Post-Mao China. Relying on the long-standing premise of ink-drawn brush strokes as unique, cosmographic “mind paintings” (*xinhua*, as also suggested by Gu’s impressed leading seal), the work expresses an artistic mindset shaped by and shaping the creative generation of Gu’s time. Its composition is, moreover, decipherable as a diagrammatic, indeed cartographic spatial design, whose intricate labyrinth of written and painted ‘signposts’ emerges like a visualized mind map of sorts: allowing us to navigate across some of the tangled historical and geographical, epigraphical and archaeological terrains of Chinese art. The presentation so maps out Gu’s work as a “Modernist Metaverse” themed on the ruined ancient Silk Road city of Loulan, hereby assessing its individual artistic and collective cultural values and meanings.



Gu Gan (1942–2020), *The Labyrinth City of Loulan (Loulan micheng)*, 1992, © Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln, Sabrina Walz